

SERVICE EFFORTS

One of the objectives of this report is to acquaint the readers with major policy initiatives. "Livable Delaware", a policy initiative spearheaded by Governor Ruth Ann Minner, provides a unique opportunity for Delawareans to become involved with quality of life issues and forms the framework for the State's stewardship of its resources.

This initiative reflects Governor Minner's long-standing commitment to preserving Delaware's environmental and cultural heritage. While a State Senator from 1982 to 1992, Governor Minner was the original legislative sponsor of the

Delaware Land and Water Conservation Act. The Governor's vision to save land for future generations resulted in the preservation of over 30,000 acres of valuable and strategic land.

As Governor, Ruth Ann Minner has committed to address other issues associated with development and quality of life---traffic congestion, air and groundwater pollution, soil erosion and storm water runoff, and the destruction of natural habitat. No matter where they live, all Delaware taxpayers pay a price for sprawl because of the state's huge investment in roads, schools and other infrastructure. When growth is haphazard, infrastructure planning becomes more costly and less efficient.

Through Executive Order, Governor Minner required each state agency to develop program, policy, budgetary and legislative changes needed to make Livable Delaware a reality. Governor Minner charged the Advisory Council on Planning Coordination with several key responsibilities under Livable Delaware including:

- Developing annexation standards and a structure of graduated, state-wide impact fees;
- Approving and monitoring "Livability Indicators" to measure progress toward curbing sprawl;
- Facilitating dispute resolution among levels of government on land use issues;
- Encouraging the redevelopment of brownfields; and,
- Developing legislation that establishes a program to promote Transfer of Development Rights.

Delaware has also continued its notable tradition of using "one-time cash" to fund a variety of capital projects and initiatives. In Fiscal Year 2001, the Governor and General Assembly earmarked \$6.9 million for open space, water and wastewater, and farmland preservation projects---a significant reduction over previous years in which surplus revenues allowed larger one-time investments in these areas. In addition, Governor Minner and the General Assembly agreed on legislation that provided a dedicated stream of revenues for land stewardship, allowing the State to purchase open space for the next 18 years.

For the Future

The fiscal 2002 operating budget totaled \$2,301.8 million, an increase of 5.4% over the fiscal 2001 budget. A total of \$11.5 million in one-time cash was appropriated for capital projects through the Bond and Capital Improvements Act. The appropriation package conformed to Delaware's constitutionally prescribed limit

of 98% of estimated revenues and fully funded Delaware's Budget Reserve ("Rainy Day Fund").

Economic forecasts suggest that Delaware's economy and revenue growth will continue to outpace those of other states, even during an economic slowdown or recession. While current projections indicate that State revenues will grow more slowly over the next several years than the past several years, these projections indicate that the State will end fiscal 2002 with a budgetary cash balance of \$396.2 million. The Governor and the General Assembly remain committed to controlling operating budget growth.